

The  
Historical and Scientific Society  
of Manitoba

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*The Old Forts of Winnipeg*  
(1738-1927)

—BY—

CHARLES NAPIER BELL, LL.D., F.R.G.S., &c.

President of the Society

*Author of: Our Northern Waters, Henry's Journal, Historical Names and Places, The Selkirk Settlement and the Settlers, Some Selkirk Settlement History, Earliest Fur Traders on the Upper Red Lake (Minn.), Mound Builders in Manitoba, Story of a Prehistoric Copper Hook, Personal Experience as a Buffalo Hunter, 1872-3, The Red River Expedition of 1870, etc.*

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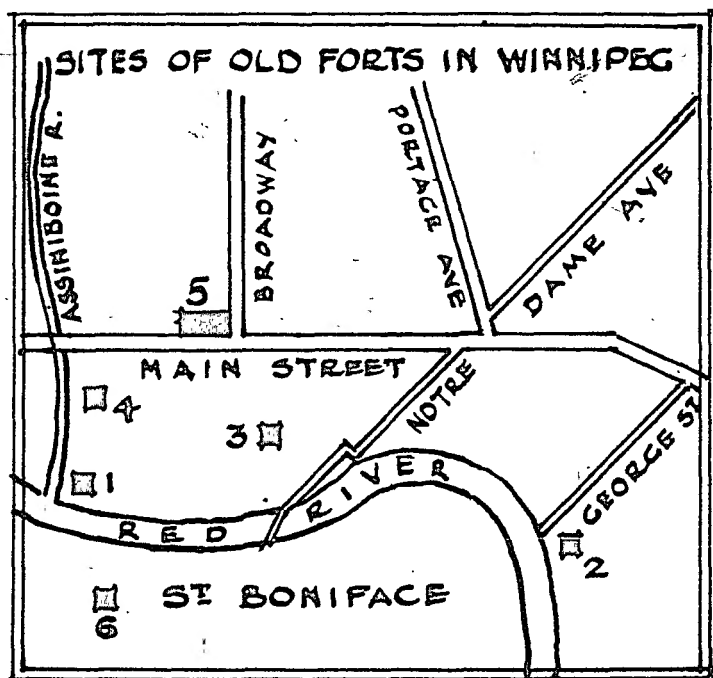
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WINNIPEG, 1927



The Governor of Red River sleighing on the river with Fort Douglas on the bank, from water color of about 1825.



1. Mythical Fort Maurepas, 1737  
     Fort Rouge, 1738  
     Fort Legardeur de St. Pierre  
     Fort Bruce and Boyer, 1780  
     Fort Alex. Henry, 1803  
     Fort Gibraltar (original) 1807-16
2. Fort Douglas, 1812
3. Midler's Fort (H. B. Co.) 1818.
4. Fort Garry the 1st (rebuilt Fort Gibraltar, 1822-35)  
     5. Fort Garry 2nd, 1835-1882
6. Traditional Post of H. B. Co., 1780



Winnipeg, May, 1927.

# The Old Forts of Winnipeg

*To the Members of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society:*

As your President, I am very frequently called upon to afford information as to some one book which gives a concise description of all the fur traders' forts, established on the site of the present City of Winnipeg, with some particulars of the cause of their establishment. I frankly confess that I have had to reply that there is no book that I know of which gives the local history of Winnipeg in the direction referred to. Consequently, in response to many requests, I am endeavouring to give, in a condensed form, what information regarding these forts I have obtained by perusal of printed and written records available to me, combined with a personal knowledge of the ground comprised in the Winnipeg area during 57 years' residence here, and many conversations and interviews had with several of the last surviving members of the original Selkirk settlers, all of whom have long since passed away. I am fully aware of my temerity in attempting such an undertaking, but can only say in explanation that I am endeavouring to give the citizens of Winnipeg some knowledge of the history of their own city, culled from many sources not available, and, in fact, unknown, to the great majority of our people. I make no excuse, however, for placing on record the facts connected with the establishing of some of the fur trading posts, or, as they were generally termed, trading forts, which have never adequately been brought into the light so that we, living in Winnipeg, can understand and appreciate some important events in our history.

I will now review, necessarily keeping within the scope of a paper of this description, the information I have gained concerning the forts of Winnipeg. It is to be always understood that in the early days of the fur trade, in Western Canada, whether under French or British occupation, practically every trading post, especially if it was protected by palisades, was called a "fort."

## FORT MAUREPAS OF THE RED RIVER

While, in general, writers on the history of Western Canada inform their readers, without reserve, that Fort Rouge was built by Verendrye, and was the first white man's post on the Red River, a matter which will, further on, be duly considered, a close study of the data available reveals the possibility at least that Jemmeraie, a nephew of Verendrye, or Verendrye's sons, in 1736, did explore the Red River from Lake Winnipeg as far as the Forks, the junction of that stream with the Assiniboine River, or even up to the Rosseau River and on to the Lake of the Woods.

There is a map (reproduced in volume 7 of the South Dakota Department of History, 1914) entitled "*Carte Contenant Les Nouvelles, decouvertes de L'ouest En Canada, Mers, Rivieres, Lacs et a Nations Qui y habittant en l'Annee, 1737. Decouverte de la mer de la mer de L' ouest, Point a la lettre de Mr. De Beauharnois du 14 (Oct. ?) 1737,*" which for that period gives quite an excellent rough description of the actual geographic features of the Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg River, Lake Winnipeg, Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and this map, be it noted, is dated the year before Verendrye himself first visited the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. One striking feature of the map is where it shows a water connection between the southwest corner of the Lake of the Woods and the Red River by the War Road River and Rosseau River, and near the lake end of this route is clearly printed "*Portage de la Savanne*"; while the western connection, where the Rosseau empties into the Red River, ten miles north of the International Boundary, is marked "*La fourche.*"

At the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, and on the north bank of the latter, there is printed the words "*Fort Maurepas.*" I do not consider that there is any necessity for confusing this Fort Maurepas with the well known fort established at the mouth of the Winnipeg River under Verendrye's directions three years previously by his sons, and to which fort Jemmeraie, on his return from Montreal in 1735, proceeded. It is possible that, if it had an existence anywhere on the Red River, it was merely an outpost of Fort Maurepas. Judge Prud'homme of the St. Boniface Historical Society (1916) considers it was a temporary post located on the Red River between the present town of Selkirk and the mouth of the Red River; but still there it appears on this map as at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine. Attention is drawn to the fact that the Red River discharges into Lake Winnipeg through several channels traversing the delta, which is covered with high reeds, making a three fold "*forks,*" and that this map of 1737 shows the words "*fort abandoned*" just where the river divides into several mouths. Judge Prud'homme states that when, in September, 1735, Verendrye passed from Fort Maurepas to the Assiniboine, he halted at Fort Aux Rosseaux (mouth of the Red River) and spent a short time in prayer at the cross raised to mark the resting place of the mortal remains of his nephew, La Jemmeraie.



Father Morice (Catholic Church in Western Canada, 1910) makes an interesting statement: "As early as 14th October, 1737, it was intended to transfer Fort Maurepas to the Great Forks of the Red River, to facilitate navigation and commerce, (Laverendrye's Journal, as quoted by Beauharnois.) To hasten the realization of this plan the Indians "built a large fort at the Forks of the Assiniboels, therein to lodge the French." (Governor Beauharnois to the French Minister, 1st October, 1738.) Father Morice sagely comments that the native structure must not have been up to the standard of the French trading posts, for in his journal for the years 1738-39 Laverendrye states explicitly that it was Mr. de Lamarque who built a fort at the Forks for the accommodation of the people of the Red River—(See under Fort Rouge).

Like all succeeding explorers and traders Verendrye found that the Indians were tremendously long on promises and remarkably short in performance, for when he arrived at the Forks next year (1738) he found no fort and during his two days' stay there he lived in his tent. As Beauharnois wrote the Minister in 1737, it probably explains how his map drawer, in anticipation, placed Fort Maurepas on the map of that year, whereas, as a fact, it never came into existence there, and Fort Maurepas remained where it was originally located, and occupied, at the mouth of the Winnipeg River.

Judge Prud'homme, in writing of a journal of Verendrye's of 1736, states "under date of November 8th, it is related how he had sent a few men by the Savanne portage to Fort Maurepas, and across country to the Red River."

In 1736 Jemmeraie died at Fort Maurepas, the news being brought to Verendrye at Fort St. Charles, Lake of the Woods, by his son and the two men whom he had sent with Jemmeraie to hold the post at Maurepas (mouth of the Winnipeg River). They informed him of "the scarcity of food which prevailed there, having left their load of goods at the Portage of the Savanna at 20 leagues from the post where I was."

According to this map of 1737, Savanna Portage was between the Lake of the Woods and Roseau Lake, and it has been assumed that Verendrye's son and the two men returned from Maurepas to Fort St. Charles via Lake Winnipeg, the Red River, the Roseau River and Lake, and the portage to the connecting stream into the Lake of the Woods. Generally speaking, this is the sum of the information regarding the mysterious Fort Maurepas at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, in 1737, but it is possible that some further definite information may be unearthed from Verendrye's reports or journals.

It is worthy of note that Alexander Henry (the nephew), in passing up the Red River, en route from Grand Portage, Lake

Superior, following his being given charge of the fur trading operations of the Northwest Company, on the Red River, under date of 28th August, 1800, entered in his journal, "As I knew the Indians desired me to leave people to winter about this place, and having been informed there was people at the entrance of Riviere aux Rosseaux, which was about a mile above us, I went to look for a proper place to build. I returned about sunset, having pitched upon the north side of the entrance of that river for the spot." Henry then fully describes the Roseaux River, and its drainage of Lake Roseaux, which latter was, "not many, about 25 miles, west of Lac des Bois." He further states: "While the French were in possession, they frequently passed by this route to the Assiniboine."

Tanner's narrative published in 1830, being the account of a white man who, as a child, was stolen by Indians of the Ohio, and later adopted by and lived with the Saulteur Indians, was for many years prior to and during the early days of the Selkirk settlement resident in the Red River country, and in his book specifically refers to this route. "We then returned to the Lake of the Woods. From this lake the Indians have a road, to go to Red River, which the white men never follow; this is by way of the Muskeek (Muskeg) or swamp carrying place." Tanner further describes in detail the stream connecting Roseaux Lake with the Red River. (Man. Hist. Socy. 1887).

This Roseaux route is shown, more or less outlined, on several maps, dated prior to 1800, which are in my own collection.

Whether this map of 1737 was actually drawn in its entirety at the date credited to it, or whether it was, like the so called Verendrye maps of 1740 and 1750, apparently caused to be prepared in Quebec by the Governor, from the various reports made by Verendrye, I have no data to work upon.

It must be kept in mind, when studying the subject, that there are several places along the course of the Red River, which at one time or another have been locally called "The Forks," viz. The mouths of the river at Lake Winnipeg, the junctions of the Assiniboine, the Roseaux (Modern Roseau), the Pembina and the Red Lake River (in Minnesota). Henry, in 1800, made a distinction when he always used the old French name "Grand Fourche" for the locality where the Red Lake River flowed into the Red, at the site of the present City of Grand Forks, North Dakota. This fact may possibly afford some solution of the vague and confused accounts of the exploration work performed by Verendrye's sons, using Fort Maurepas as a base, about 1736.

### **FORT ROUGE**

It has been generally accepted, and passed on, by many writers on the subject, that Fort Rouge was built by Verendrye himself in 1738, when he made his first voyage of discovery from

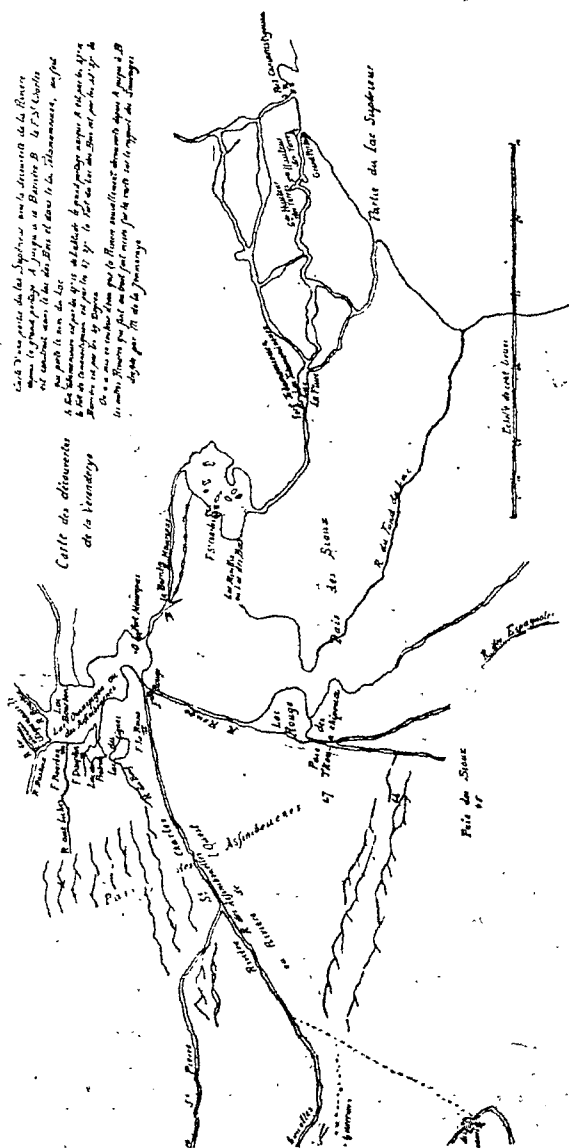
Fort Maurepas, at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, through Lake Winnipeg and up the Red and Assiniboine Rivers to the Mandans of the Missouri River. It is passing strange how readily this idea, erroneous as it is in fact, has prevailed. An authentic copy and translation of Verendrye's journal, or narrative, for the years 1738-39, is to be found, as in several other places, in the annual report of the Canadian Archives Department, 1889, and when hereafter I use the words "Verendrye's Journal," I refer, unless otherwise specifically stated, to this particular document, of which the opening paragraph is as follows:

"Journal in the form of a letter, from the 20th of July, 1738, date of my departure from Michilimakinak, to May, 1739, sent to the Marquis de Beauharnois, Commander of the Military Order of St. Louis, Governor and Lieutenant-General of the whole of New-France, lands and country of Louisiana, by his very humble servant, Laverendrye, lieutenant of a company of the detachment of the Marine in Canada, commissioned by his orders for the discovery of the Western Sea."

There is not one word in this paragraph relating to trading in furs, but the journal reveals that at least one principal object of his expedition was the discovery and examination of the strange people called the Mandans, who, the Indians questioned had reported, were white men like the French, having a light complexion, blonde hair and blue eyes, and that they lived upon a great stream which flowed to the ocean.

Now, let us examine the journal itself to ascertain just what small part Verendrye himself announces he actually had in the establishment of Fort Rouge. After leaving the French fort or post at Kaministiquia on the 6th August, 1738, where "I had your orders published and left a copy with the French who keep the fort concerning that post, and that of Tekamamihouenne (Fort St. Pierre, Rainy Lake), to be handed to M. de Lamarque, who was to arrive there at an early date," he proceeded on his western journey. On the 22nd August, he was at Rainy Lake, and then went on to Fort St. Charles at the west end of the Lake of the Woods. There he writes:

"I deferred leaving until the 11th of September, waiting for Mr. de Lamarque, to whom I had promised not to hasten, so as to give him the opportunity of joining me, he having promised me at Michilimakinak to make haste, so that he might come with me in the autumn for the discovery of the Mandans. Seeing on the 10th of the month that he had not arrived, and everything being in good order, I left on the 11th, hoping that he would join me soon to come with me."



Copy of manuscript map from the Canadian Archives. As Forts Bourbon and Dauphin, etc., are shown, date must be about 1740-1. Note Fort Rouge at junction of Assiniboine with Red River.

Verendrye arrived at Fort Maurepas, at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, on the 22nd September, where he examined the arms, published the Governor's Orders concerning the post, gave a copy of it to Mr. Lariviere (misprint in Archives copy. Should be D'Amours de Louviere), clerk to these gentlemen, (that is, to his creditors in Montreal) and selected five of his men to take with him. His next sentence is: "I went to the Fork of the Asiliboiles (Assiniboine) on the 24th. (Sept.), where I found ten Cree huts and two war chiefs, who expected me, with a quantity of meat, having been notified that I was coming."

It is somewhat strange that Verendrye gives no description of his voyage across Lake Winnipeg and up the Red River, and, as Indians were at the Forks awaiting him, it would appear that he was quite well informed on the route he had just traversed, and was in some measure at least in touch with the Assiniboine River Indians. His description of the country commences with his journey up the Assiniboine, of which river it is quite clear he previously had no personal experience. After waiting at the Forks (he says in his tent) for only two days to banquet with the Indians, he sent on the canoes up the Assiniboine, and himself proceeded on foot on the north side, and so continued until he arrived on the 2nd October at the prairie portage (now Portage la Prairie), where the Indians of that region passed north to Lake Manitoba, and so on down to conduct their trade with the English (Hudson's Bay Company's traders or posts). While avowedly desirous of ascending farther, probably to the Souris, where the regular route to the Mandan country started, as proved by the accounts of all travellers and traders after his time, he found that the stage of water in the Assiniboine was unusually low, and so could not proceed further up with his canoes. He emphasized that he had no resources to repair canoes, having neither gum nor resin, and, therefore, after careful examination of the land, he built Fort la Reine, which, for many years following, was the centre of the French operations in the western country.

The journal now informs us in express terms who did build the post, always since referred to as Fort Rouge.

"On the 9th October, Mr. de Lamarque, with the Sieur Nolant, his brother, and eight men, in two canoes, arrived, which gave me much pleasure. I testified my gratitude to Mr. de Lamarque for the trouble he had taken to bring us reinforcements. I questioned him if he had left many people at Fort St. Charles, Lake of the Woods, and whom he had left at Maurepas. He answered me that he had left eight men at the first, with two traders, having brought all the canoes he had, not because he hoped to be able to load them, not having been able to bring the heavy goods, but that he had promised he would join me, and did not wish to break his word, that I required people for my expedition, that he had brought them without injury to himself, not requiring his people during the winter. I thanked him, telling

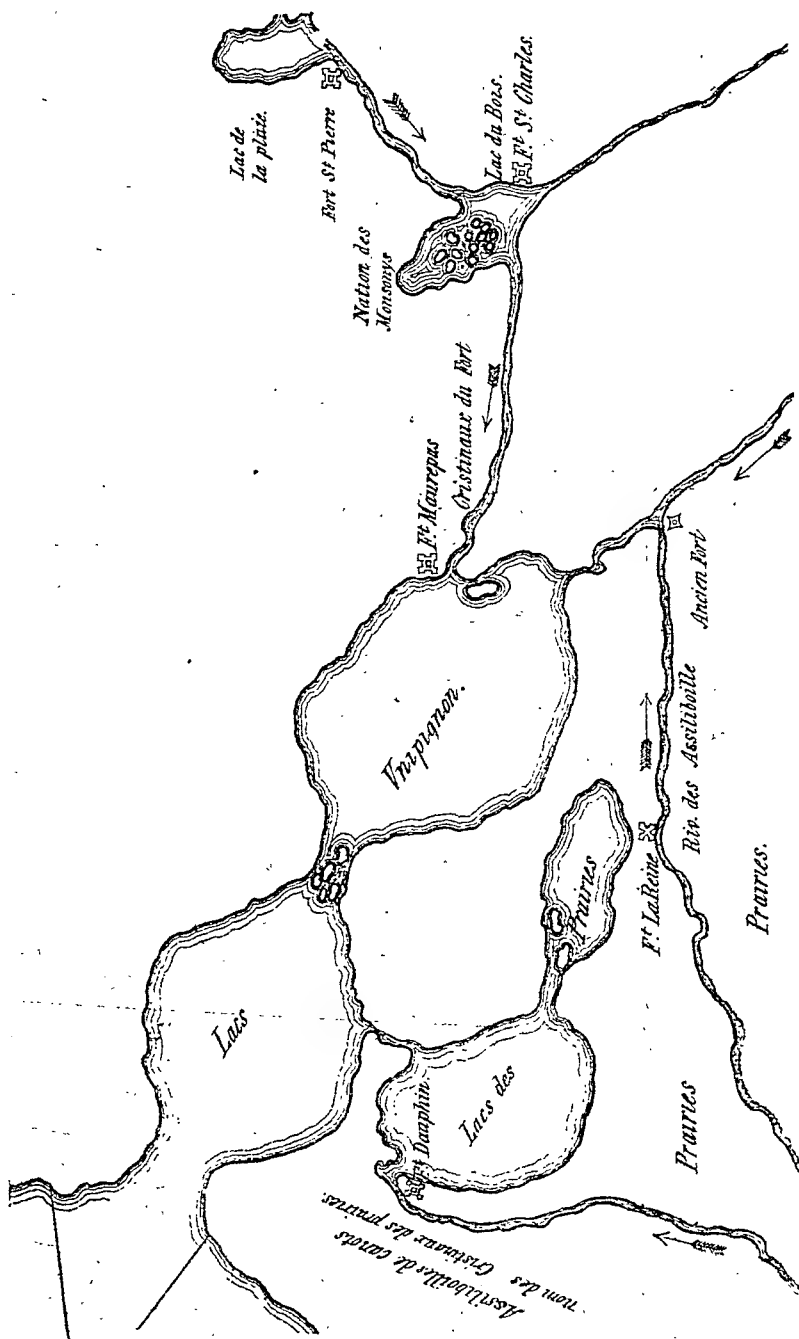
him that if he joined in our expedition, he would be saved, himself and all his people, the expense until they returned. He told me he wished to share the expense. I answered that that could not be, it was enough for me that he supplied the men and himself without the necessity of sharing the expense, which I had already provided for. I gave him room, at his request, in my fort, to build a house to lodge all his people. Mr. de Lamarque told me he had brought Mr. de Louviere to the Forks, with two canoes, to build a fort there for the accommodation of the people of the Red River. I approved of it if the Indians were notified."

There can be no doubt, in view of the above explicit statement by Verendrye himself, that it was de Lamarque who built Fort Rouge, and that his status was that of an independent gentleman (probably representing Verendrye's eastern creditors), but certainly a valued and trusted friend to Verendrye. The latter, in many places later on in his journal, refers to de Lamarque as being treated as an equal, consulted in all matters of importance, and sharing in all matters connected with their life and hardships as an intimate friend and companion. And this friendly relationship was extended also to de Lamarque's brother, the Sieur Nolant. Benj. Sulte affords the information that de Lamarque (Jean Nolant) was born in Quebec in 1694, and under his mother's name became the companion of La Verendrye.

Judge Prud'homme (St. Boniface Historical Society) is my authority for stating that in the spring of 1735 Verendrye himself wrote: "I had, before leaving (June 6, 1735) ceded to my tradesmen the privilege of trading and the business of the posts I had established, the previously interested parties having finished their term," and that this action was taken so that he could devote all his energy, untrammelled by commercial interests, to exploration.

It is foreign to the subject of Fort Rouge to make any extended comments on the expedition of Verendrye and de Lamarque from Fort la Reine to the Mandans on the Missouri, beyond stating that they were unquestionably the first white men to discover the upper Missouri and this Indian Nation, but the latter greatly disappointed the explorers, who had been hoping to find white people, possibly Spaniards, living on a great river that flowed into the "Western Sea." In the spring of 1739, after returning from the Mandan expedition to Fort la Reine, where they were very short of provisions, Mr. de Lamarque left for Fort Maurepas, at which place he heard his people were starving, and from the context of Verendrye's journal, it seems most probable that he visited his outpost at the Forks, although no specific statement to that effect is made. That one winter's occupation apparently comprises the history of the actual existence of Fort Rouge, except that it continued as a place on the maps—a printed name only.

It is to be noted that neither de Lamarque nor Verendrye in the journal names this post as "Fort Rouge," but, on the con-



Section of map of new discoveries in the West of Canada, drawn from memoirs of Mr. de la Verendrie and given to the Depot of the Marine by Mr. de la Galissoniere, 1750.

trary, it is simply stated that de Lamarque had brought Louviere to the "Forks" to build a fort there for the accommodation of the people (Indians) of the Red River. Neither is it stated on which side of the river it was situated. It is reasonable to assume that the person who drew the 1740 map from the information supplied in the reports of Verendrye, instead of naming it Fort Riviere Rouge decided on the condensed form of Fort Rouge—the Red Fort. Certainly these explorers and traders did not paint their temporary rough barked log structures. It is significant in this connection that Verendrye both hitherto and afterwards named every fort established by him west of Lake Superior, after some high official person. Why did the individual who prepared this map for the Governor of Canada depart from Verendrye's previously invariable policy in selecting names for forts."

The only three writers who, so far as I have read, lay any stress on de Lamarque's connection with Fort Rouge, are Judge Prud'homme (St. Boniface Historical Society, 1916), De Land (State Dept. of History South Dakota, 1914) and Morice (Catholic Church in Western Canada, 1910).

Out of the multitude of books written on Verendrye's journeys, I refer to but two of the more ambitious to illustrate how the main feature of who was responsible for the building of Fort Rouge was completely overlooked. Dr. Bryce (*Five Forts of Winnipeg*, 1886) does not mention de Lamarque, and apparently never heard of him. Burpee (*The Search for the Western Seas*, 1908) merely refers to de Lamarque as a trader taken by Verendrye with him on the Mandan expedition. But then Burpee on two pages preceding had written that it was the two sons of Verendrye who had built both Fort Rouge and Fort La Reine, and this two years before these forts came into existence, which is just another illustration of the danger of relying on second hand authorities when the original documents are available.

The name "Fort Rouge" appears on a map, dated 1740, which, admittedly, was prepared by the Governor of New France from the information contained in Verendrye's journals, and, as thereon the Assiniboine and Red Rivers are shown as running almost parallel for a considerable distance before joining, and thus becoming the "Forks," it was quite natural for the compiler, whoever he was, to assume that the fort was placed in the immediate angle formed by the junction of the two rivers, but to anyone cognizant of the topography of the land on both sides of the Assiniboine River at the Forks, (the south side being relatively very low, subject to spring floods, heavily covered with willows and small trees, and quite open to attack by the fierce and hostile Sioux, who had already killed Verendrye's son, a priest, and nineteen of his men near Fort St. Charles, while the north bank was and still is much higher, and, in fact, the edge of a large prairie area extending both north and west, with a shallow line of heavy timber reaching back from the banks of both streams), common



sense would dictate that the side to build on was the north bank, which naturally and invariably afterwards was chosen by the French and British traders for camping ground and building site purposes. Indeed, fortunately, we have evidence regarding the site of Fort Rouge.

Alexander Henry (the nephew) arrived at the Forks in 1800, and his journal, written while in camp on the north bank of the Assiniboine, under date of August 19th, contains the following entry:—"Upon this spot, in the time of the French, there was a trading establishment, traces of which are still to be seen where their chimneys and cellars stood." Henry gives a number of descriptions of his camp site, which quite conclusively prove that he was on the spot where Fort Rouge stood. (See also evidence of John McDonnell in 1793 under "Fort Bruce and Boyer, following). For fully 60 years after de Lamarque erected this fort, which, so far as is known, existed only during the winter of 1738-9, the name "Fort Rouge" appeared on many different European maps, British, French, Dutch and Italian, as if the fort was still in existence. It is curious how that name stuck in the minds of map makers, who copied it one from the other, long after the French had withdrawn from the western country, and even after the occupation of the territory by the British traders from Montreal. An impartial study of the ascertained facts must convince any student that Lamarque built the Fort Rouge post, that it was in existence for probably only one winter, and that it was on the north bank of the Assiniboine River at the Forks. That McDonnell, and afterwards, Henry, at least 50 years after Fort Rouge passed out of existence, should recognize the remains of the post, is quite within the understanding of men like Mr. J. B. Tyrrell (who edited the Champlain Society's Vol. of Thompson), who has located, and even photographed, the remains of many trading posts which had existed nearly a century before. Some forty years ago, I myself, located the ruins of old trading posts, which were erected eighty or more years previously, near the mouth of Souris River, and easily identified the sites by the cellar hollows and scattered chimney materials, and, in cases, the outline of the enclosing stockades could be traced. Also when in 1872-3, as a youth of eighteen years of age, I travelled and hunted in the North Saskatchewan country and far down south into the buffalo areas, my half-breed companions pointed out to me the easily discernable sites of traders' posts erected three-quarters of a century before. Sir Alexander Mackenzie recorded that before 1800 the marks of wheeled carriages and agricultural implements were visible about the old posts of the early French traders situated on the Saskatchewan River below the forks of that river.

### **LEGARDEUR DE SAINT-PIERRE'S FORT**

Legardeur de St. Pierre (whose journal or report is in the Canadian Archives report, 1887) in 1750 was appointed by the authorities in Quebec to succeed Verendrye, in charge of the western posts, and arrived, with his Lieutenant de Niverville, at

Fort Maurepas, situated at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, but the season was so far advanced that it was impossible for de Niverville to travel by canoe to Fort Bourbon on the Saskatchewan River, (his destination) and he and his men were forced to proceed overland on foot from the mouth of the river, carrying their baggage and provisions on their backs or dragging them on small sleds. Finding no provisions at Fort Bourbon, they were exposed to starvation, and passed the winter miserably in a state of famine. M. de St. Pierre reached Verendrye's Fort La Reine on the Assiniboine, which, having been abandoned since the departure of that explorer and his sons, was delapidated and devoid of provisions. His report informs us that he started north to join de Niverville, who had become seriously ill, but turned back and did nothing further during the summer of 1751. During the winter of 1751-1752, de St. Pierre had quite an exciting adventure at Fort La Reine. On the 22nd February, he was in the fort with five Frenchmen, having sent the rest of his men out to secure provisions, which he had been without for some days, when 200 armed Assiniboines came into the fort, became very turbulent, and announced to the interpreter that they wanted to pillage the place and kill St. Pierre. The latter no sooner learned of their intention than he seized hold of a burning brand, burst open the door of the powder magazine, and smashed in the head of a barrel of powder, over which he waved the burning torch, which the Indians no sooner beheld than they, in great fear and consternation, fled out of the fort.

After spending the winter of 1751-2 at Fort La Reine, de St. Pierre in the spring left with all his men for Grand Portage, Lake Superior. The adventure of February had so frightened his employees that none of them would consent to remain during the summer to take care of the fort, so he asked the Indians to do so. However, while travelling down the Winnipeg River on his return voyage from Grand Portage, he was informed on the 29th September that four days after his departure from Fort La Reine, the Assiniboine Indians had burned it to the ground. This information, combined with the scarcity of provisions he found prevailing, obliged him to go to spend the winter at the Red River, where game was abundant. At just what point on the Red River he wintered he does not state, but most likely it was at the stragetic "Forks," and, with his experience of the turbulent Assiniboines, he undoubtedly erected the customary stockaded protection for his winter houses. (See under Fort Bruce and Boyer).

It would appear, then, that once again there was a fort, occupied but for one winter, at the Forks, and within the limits of the present City of Winnipeg.

St. Pierre was succeeded in 1753 by the Chevalier de la Corne, who caused to be built a fort below the juncture of the two branches of the Saskatchewan River, and named it Fort La Corne.

which name was recognized by the first British Montreal Traders, and has continued for that place to the present day. In 1756 all the western posts were abandoned by the French, whose regime west of Lake Superior terminated.

### FORT BRUCE AND BOYER

A partner of the Northwest Company, John McDonnell, while serving in the interests of his company on the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers, in 1793-5, kept a quite complete journal, extracts from which are included in Masson's *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*. Writing of the old French forts of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, he placed the following information on record: "At the Forks, the remains of several old posts are still to be seen, some of which were built as far back as the time of the French Government"; and again—"three leagues above Portage la Prairie stood Le Fort des Trembles, or Poplar Fort. In the year 1780 or 1781, the Indians made an attempt to pillage the traders, Bessrs. Bruce and Boyer, and, in the scuffle that ensued, two Frenchmen and seven Indians were killed upon the spot. Owing to this affair, the traders were obliged, for fear of being cut off, to re-embark their canoes and return to winter at the Forks. The smallpox seizing the natives, and sweeping off three-fourths of them, compelled them to lay aside their intention of cutting off all the white men in the interior country."

This is a definite statement, afterwards in all essentials corroborated by Alex. Henry (nephew) in 1806, that a fort was in existence at The Forks in 1781. Sir Alexander MacKenzie in his book makes a short reference to the fight at Fort des Trembles, but says nothing of the traders' retreat to The Forks.

It is not clear from any of the accounts whether Bruce and Boyer were employees of one of the large trading concerns antedating the formation of the Northwest Company, or independent traders from Lake Superior. Boyer certainly was in the employ of the Northwest Company in 1787, when he was sent to the Peace River by Sir Alex. MacKenzie to establish a fort, and remained there for two years. Of Bruce nothing further seems to be on record.

In view of the fighting that had taken place, it may be safely assumed that Bruce and Boyer, with nearly a score of men, had their post well protected in case of an Indian attack. John McDonnell's statement, that in 1793 the remains of several old posts were still visible, which had been in existence during the French regime and before the British traders from Montreal had reached the Forks is, like the evidence of Henry in 1800, valuable as locating where Louviere in 1738, and likely St. Pierre in 1753, had each passed at least one winter on the north bank of the Assiniboine, where the latter stream merges with the Red River. It is especially valuable as a record that this post of Bruce and Boyer was the first fort we know of as built at the Forks by British traders following the close of the old French regime.

## ALEXANDER HENRY'S "THE FORK'S FORT."

Alexander Henry (the nephew) a partner of the North West Company, left us a journal, which includes a lengthy account of his life on the Red River during the years 1800-8. I was fortunate enough to discover this journal in the Library of Parliament at Ottawa in 1887, and extracts from it form the substance of three papers read before the Manitoba Historical Society in 1888 (Transactions Nos. 31, 35 and 37), or nine years before the talented Dr. Elliot Coues published it in full with such extensive and wonderfully explanatory notes in three volumes under the title of "New Light on the Early History of the Great North West." Henry, on September 27th, 1803, established, as an outpost of his main trading fort at Pembina, a small trading post at the Forks, under the charge of one Louis Dorion. Henry, under date of January 19th, 1804, recorded that he visited this post for inspection, and found Dorion practically starving through lack of provisions; and about two weeks later, on reaching this establishment for the second time, found his men starving, as were also his people at Portage la Prairie. As a consequence of Dorion's experience, the post was discontinued the following year, and so another "fort" at the Forks disappeared.

It is interesting to have a record of the furs that Dorion, in conjunction with another outpost, existing at the same time, at the Dead River (now Nettley Creek), secured in trade for the North West Company. The list includes: 350 beavers, 24 black bears, 16 brown bears, 52 fishers, 35 otters, 200 martens, 146 wolverines and 700 muskrats, and a considerable mixed lot of other furs.

All the traders, who have left us journals describing their life and movements in the Red and Assiniboine rivers country, give more or less extensive notes regarding the Forks, which was the rendezvous where the brigades of canoes and boats, arriving from both Lake Superior and James Bay, re-sorted their trading goods to fill the assignments destined for the various posts and outposts scattered along both rivers up into the interior. Winnipeg's status as a distributing centre certainly dates from this period.

In Henry's journal we get a sidelight into the customs which prevailed at The Forks in 1806, when it is related that Henry, returning from an inspection of his post at Portage la Prairie to take to Fort William his brigade of boats laden with the winter's trade of furs at Grand Forks and Pembina and their outposts, joined his men at The Forks, and on the 4th June "played with J. McKenzie of the H. B. Co., with drum, fife, etc., and drank out a ten gallon keg of brandy." It is to be hoped that the brandy was the diluted article called "trade liquor," but in any case both parties were able to leave next day en route for Albany House on James Bay, and Fort William, Lake Superior.

## FORT GIBRALTAR

The autobiographical notes of John McDonald of Garth, a partner of the North West Company, which are to be found in Masson's Volume 2, under date of 1807, contain the following passage:—

"I established a fort at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, and called it "Gibraltar," though there was not a rock or stone within three miles."

Thus was established Fort Gibraltar, the headquarters of not only the fur trade of the North West Company on the Red, Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers, and country adjacent to these streams, but of the operations of that company against the Hudson's Bay Company, following the establishment of the Selkirk Colony, which came into existence in 1812, with the arrival of the first contingent of Selkirk settlers.

Fort Gibraltar was erected on the north side of the Assiniboine River, where that stream joins the Red River, and extended somewhat along the bank of the latter. In the year 1871, following my service as a soldier of the Red River expedition, under General Wolseley, which reached Fort Garry in 1870 via the old fur traders' route from Lake Superior to Winnipeg, in company with my friend Corporal (afterwards General) Sam B. Steele, I took a walk down the Assiniboine from Fort Garry a few hundred yards to the traditional site of Fort Gibraltar, and there, plainly to be seen very near to the edge of the bank, were recognizable hollows representing cellars, and the mixture of semi-calcined limestone, remains of chimneys, and while at that time we were rather hazy on the subject of the history of Fort Gibraltar, it was clear to us that buildings of some kind had been on that ground, though it was also evident that almost the whole area of the enclosure that had once been there had disappeared into the river through the washing away and crumbling in of the banks. Steele drew to my attention several much decayed human bones and one skull close to the water's edge, which had apparently rolled down from near the general ground level of the bank through undermining by the heavy spring flood. (Henry in 1800 refers to the extensive Indian grave yard hereabouts). I am quite satisfied that the hollows and chimney debris which we then saw were the last remains of Fort Gibraltar.

I visited, and carefully inspected this site this present month, and found that if not in the two rivers, what remains of it is now buried many feet under the cinders and general refuse of the railway yard of the Canadian National.

It is not necessary for me, in connection with Fort Gibraltar, to give any details of its history after the arrival of the first Selkirk settlers, because the history of that period has been fully covered, not only by the published statements of the North West

Publié sous le Privilège de l'Académie des Sciences, du 4 Septembre 1754.

Reduction de la CARTE tracée par laquelle a donné lieu aux Découvertes des Officiers

Explication des Signes marqués sur la carte du Sauvage Ochagach.

- Rapides
- Petits Portages
- Gr. Portages
- Côte où se font les Portages
- ✱ Hauteur des Terres
- Cours des Rivières

# CARTE PHYSIQUE des Terrains les plus élevés de la Partie Occidentale du CANADA :

Où l'on voit les Nouvelles  
Découvertes des Officiers  
Français à l'Ouest du Lac  
Supérieur, sont les Rivières et les  
Lacs dont M. Joremy a parlé dans la  
Relation de la Bage de Hudson.  
Dressée par Philippe Buache.

## REMARKES.

On a ici concilié les 3 Cartes de nos Officiers Français dont il a été  
parlé dans les Considérations, pp. 13 et suiv. et l'on en a rapproché ce  
que M. Joremy a dit du Cours de la Rivière de Bourbon. Nos Officiers  
ont observé que le Fort Camanestigon est à 47° 22' de latitude N. et  
Pierre à 47° 15' et le Fort St. Charles à 48° 27'. En conséquence de ces  
deux dernières Observations et du Cours des Rivières qui sont plus à  
l'Ouest, on doit reconnaître que le Cours du Mississippi, qui nous est peu  
connu au dessus du Saint S. Antoine, est de l'Ouest à l'Est et non  
pas du Nord-Est, comme on l'a supposé jusqu'à présent.

Dans la Carte du Sauvage Ochagach, les Lacs et Rivières ont à l'O.  
du Lac Supérieur, au lieu que dans les Cartes des Off. Français elles  
prennent la direction de l'Est. Cette diff. semble venir de ce que  
que les Sauvages dans leur courir ne font pas une autre grande at-  
tention aux différentes parties de l'Horizon où le Soleil se lève et se couche  
dans les diff. Saisons, et ainsi cette considération doit entrer dans l'esti-  
mation de leurs Directions comparées avec celles des Nations plus éclairées.

Les Chimées de Montagnes indiquées par la Suite des Sources des  
Rivières, partant de cette partie du Canada en trois Bassins Terrestres  
inclines l'un vers l'autre du Mexique et où coulent les eaux qui forment  
le Mississippi, l'autre vers la D. de Hudson ou se jette la Riv. de Bourbon,  
qui est l'écoulement des Lacs nouvellement découverts, le 3. vers l'Océan, les  
lacs où se décharge le St. Laurent, qui sont principalement formés par  
les eaux des Lacs Supérieurs et autres, à ses Sources, comme on le voit  
présentement vers les Lacs Ojémagu et Tecumamouch, aux embou-  
tures desquels sont aussi celles de la Rivière de Bourbon.

Quelques nos Officiers ont marqué par des Signes sur les Cartes  
de leurs Découvertes les hauteurs des Terres et le cours des Rivières ils  
ont cependant supposé comme les Sauvages, de ces Communications  
prétendues de Rivières dont le cours est opposé et aux quelles on ne  
connaît que par des Portages, sans qu'en trouve plusieurs, et  
comme les dans les Considérations, pp. 145 et suiv. Mais pour expri-  
mer l'état naturel du Terrain, au lieu d'employer des Signes, on a re-  
présenté ici des Montagnes entre les Sources des Rivières voisines des  
la partie Ouest du Lac Supérieur, dont les uns se déchargent,  
et les autres coulent à l'Ouest ou au Sud.

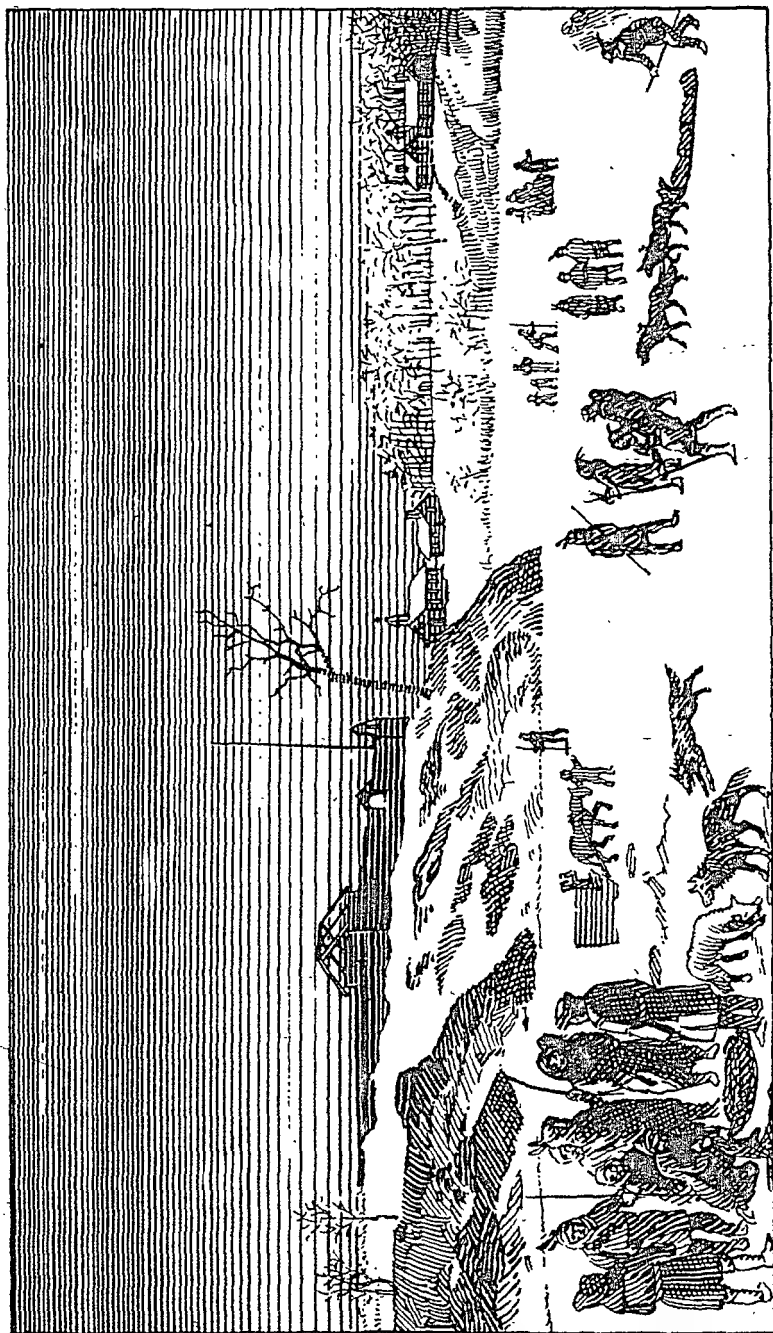


par le Sauvage Ochagach et autres,  
liciers Français représentées dans la Carte cy jointe.

VIII<sup>e</sup> Carte pour la 3<sup>e</sup> et dernière Partie  
des Considérations, &c.



drawn on birch bark about 1728 for Verendrye, at Lake Superior by the Indian Ochagach, and which  
or. Note that Fort Rouge has already disappeared.



Second Fort Gibraltar (rebuilding). From water color in Dominion Archives. Painted in 1821. By courtesy Mr. H. S. Seaman.



Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Lord Selkirk's Colony Officials, but by a multitude of writers, who have written everything from fact to fiction regarding the aggressive acts of the two companies which took place at that time, culminating on the 17th March, 1816, in the destruction by the order of the Selkirk Colony Governor Semple of Fort Gibraltar, during the absense of the partner in charge, when even the material of the fort was pulled down, floated by the river to Fort Douglas, nearly a mile below, and used to strengthen the Colony Fort; and shortly after in the killing of Semple, the Colony Governor, and a number of his followers by employees of the Northwest Company on the site known as Seven Oaks, in the northern part of Winnipeg. As a result of this clashing of interests, Colonel Coltman was sent by the Governor-General of Canada as commissioner to inquire into the whole facts of the situation, and following this lamentable state of affairs, which almost financially ruined both companies, the rival interests came together and amalgamated under the charter name of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Whether Fort Gibraltar was re-erected by the Northwest Company in 1816 has been somewhat a matter of conjecture. Beckles Willson in "The Great Company," states that "Fort Gibraltar had been destroyed, but the Northwester's at once set about erecting buildings to carry on their trade."

Hon. Donald Gunn, for years following the year 1813, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, finally settling in the Red River Colony, in his book "History of Manitoba," wrote as follows: "The Northwest Company's fort had been razed to the ground and could not be restored; but that active and energetic body procured new materials, built new houses and stores on the old site, and commenced business anew."

Donald Gunn lived until 1878, highly respected not only for his lovable personal qualities, but as well for the services he rendered as a veteran and valued correspondent of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

It is to be noted that Gunn, while mentioning houses and stores, does not include palisades or walls, but Ross in 1825 (see under heading "Fort Garry, the First") draws particular attention to the absence of any defensive enclosure except two wooden bastions of the renamed fort.

The Rev. John West sent to the Red River Settlement from England in 1820 as Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, under date of the 11th Nov., 1821, wrote that he was "greatly disappointed at not having the building (schoolhouse) so far finished as to have accommodated the schoolmaster with a residence, as well as to have afforded a place for divine worship before this period. He is now resident with the Indian boys at the post which formerly belonged to the Northwest Company."

That the Hudson's Bay Company immediately after the amalgamation did do business in a fort at the Forks is also proved by the recorded evidence of eye witnesses like Donald Murray (see statement under Fidler's Fort), for the stores of the company at Fort Douglas were closed. (Also see statement of marriage entry in St. John's Church under the heading of "Fort Garry").

## FORT DOUGLAS

There was in the early days of the Red River Settlement a floating tradition that the Hudson's Bay Company at one time had a post or fort on the east bank of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine, in what is now St. Boniface, but I have not been able to obtain much information relating to it, and it must have had a very transitory existence. It is true that Arrow-smith's map of the "Interior Parts of North America," which was inscribed by permission to the Hon. Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into the Hudson's Bay, and dated January 1st, 1796, shows that a house was on that site in 1780, but gives no indication as to whether or not it was a Hudson's Bay Company's establishment. I have not come across any definite claim that such a post was established by the Northwest Company, and it is generally accepted that Fort Douglas, erected on the north side of a small coulee, emptying into the Red River, at the foot of what is now Robert and George Avenues, in the City of Winnipeg (I found the coulee outlet through the river bank to be easily discerned as late as this month) was the first Hudson's Bay Company's fort established in the Winnipeg area, and this fort was not only utilized for the stores of the company, but was the official headquarters and residence of the Governor of the Selkirk Colony after the arrival of the settlers in 1812. Fort Douglas, therefore, became the centre of the Hudson's Bay Company's and Red River settlement interests. After the Seven Oaks conflict in 1816, it was temporarily occupied by the officers and employees of the Northwest Company, their own Fort Gibraltar having been previously destroyed by the order of Semple, the Colony Governor.

The detailed history of Fort Douglas, like that of Fort Gibraltar, is so fully covered in the Government reports of the day, and books of many writers, more or less accurate or colored, according to the prejudices of their writers, and which may be obtained in any good Canadian library, that I need not further dilate on the subject.

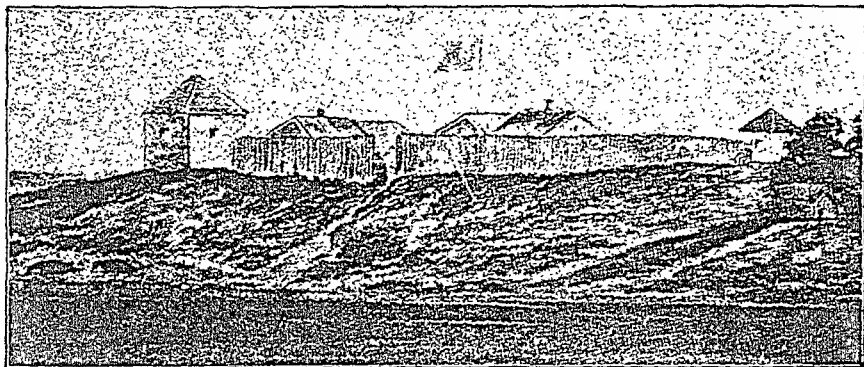
After the conflicts, Fort Douglas continued to be the residence of the Colony Governor as apart from the Hudson's Bay Company, and one of these, Andrew Bulgar, writing under date of August 4th, 1822, gives a shocking description of the place. His words are: "As to what is styled Fort Douglas. It is well situated, though there is a better position for a fort about 200 yards higher up, upon the land which Mr. Pritchard gave up. But as to the fort itself, it is, as Mr. Halkett can tell you, the most filthy,

miserable place imaginable. It is by at least 25 feet too small, and the stockades are for the most part rotten and tumbling down. The buildings, except one, are mere log huts, very old and so full of holes as to be perfectly unsuitable. The only one that is of any value is what is called the new house, but even this is nothing more than the shell of a badly built log house, being nowhere boarded outside, and having but two rooms finished inside, and so badly have these been done that the light may be seen through the walls in many places."

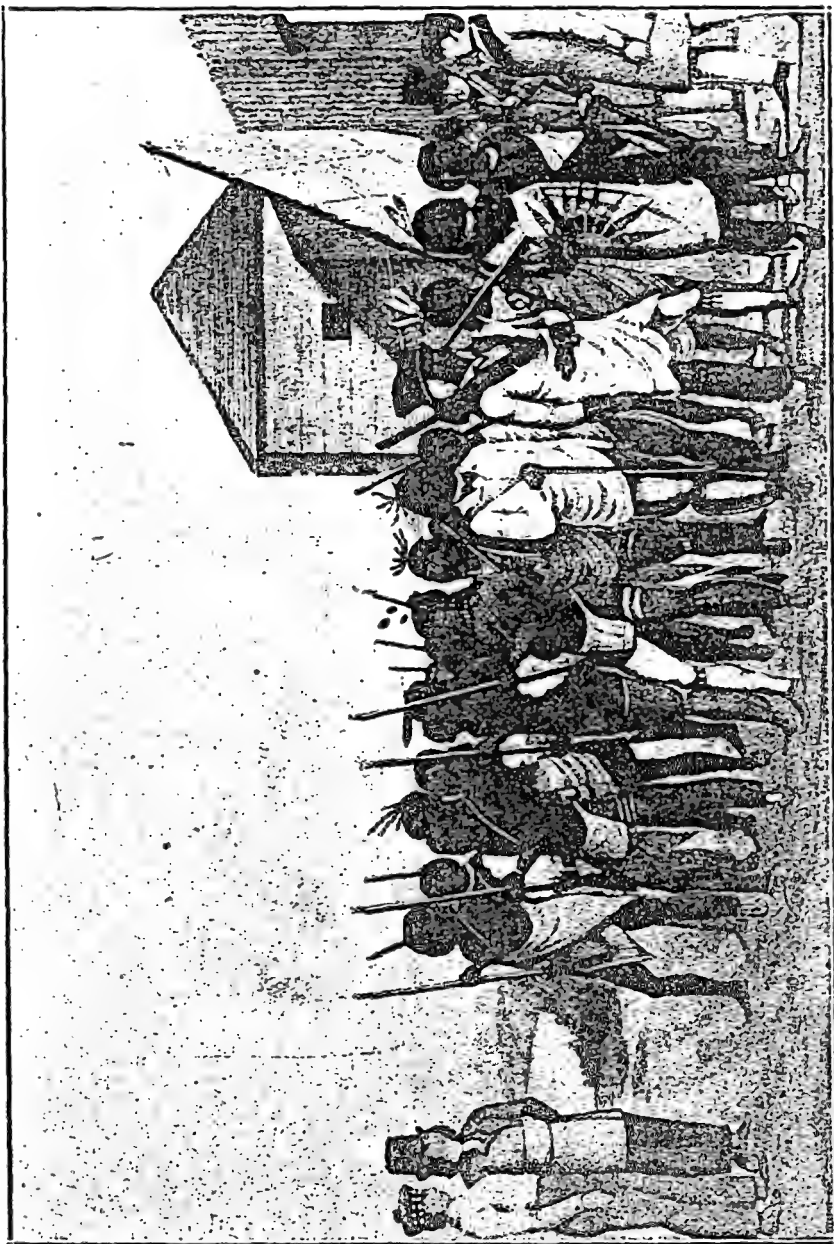
I regret that while I secured possession of a large number of letters and documents of that period, which would be very valuable in connection with a description of Fort Douglas, at his request I, many years ago, surrendered all these papers to the late Lord Strathcona, and they are no longer available as historical matter. It so chanced, however, that I have in my possession the original official file of the copies of various documents relating to the Red River Settlement, which was given to Captain Robert Parker Pelly as "Governor of Ossiniboia" on his departure from London, 21st May, 1823. When either of the governors of the General Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company was present, the power of the Governor of Ossiniboia was suspended for the time being for judicial purposes.

After the re-purchase from the Selkirk estate of his rights under the original deed of sale, the governors came strictly under the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company itself.

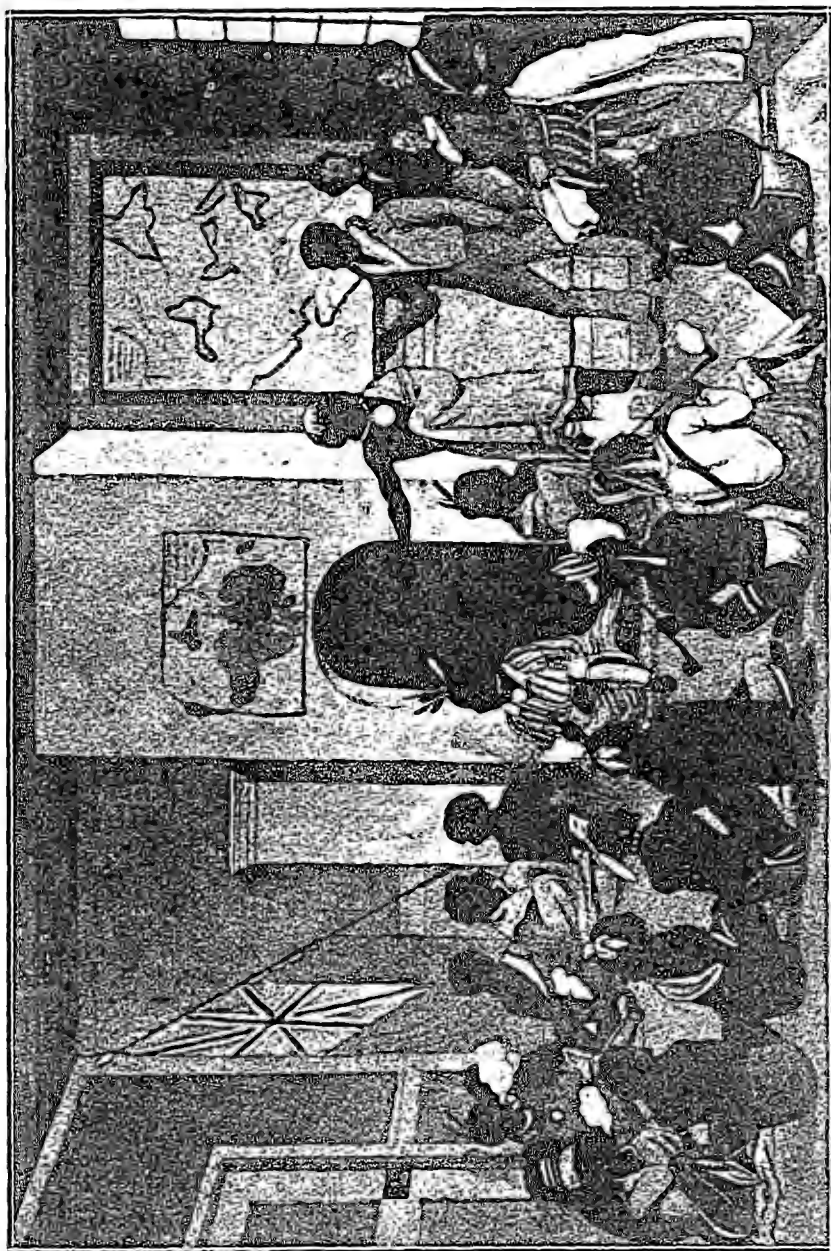
The end of Fort Douglas came with the high waters of what is locally called the great flood of 1826, when the people of the settlement were forced to flee from their homes and take refuge for a time on the high grounds of Bird's Hill or Stoney Mountain.



Fort Douglas. From water color by Lord Selkirk, 1817.



R. P. Felly, Governor of Assinibola, meeting band of Red Lake Indians outside of Fort Douglas gate about 1826.



Salteux Indians receiving band of Salteux Indians in Fort Douglas. From water color sketch, 1823

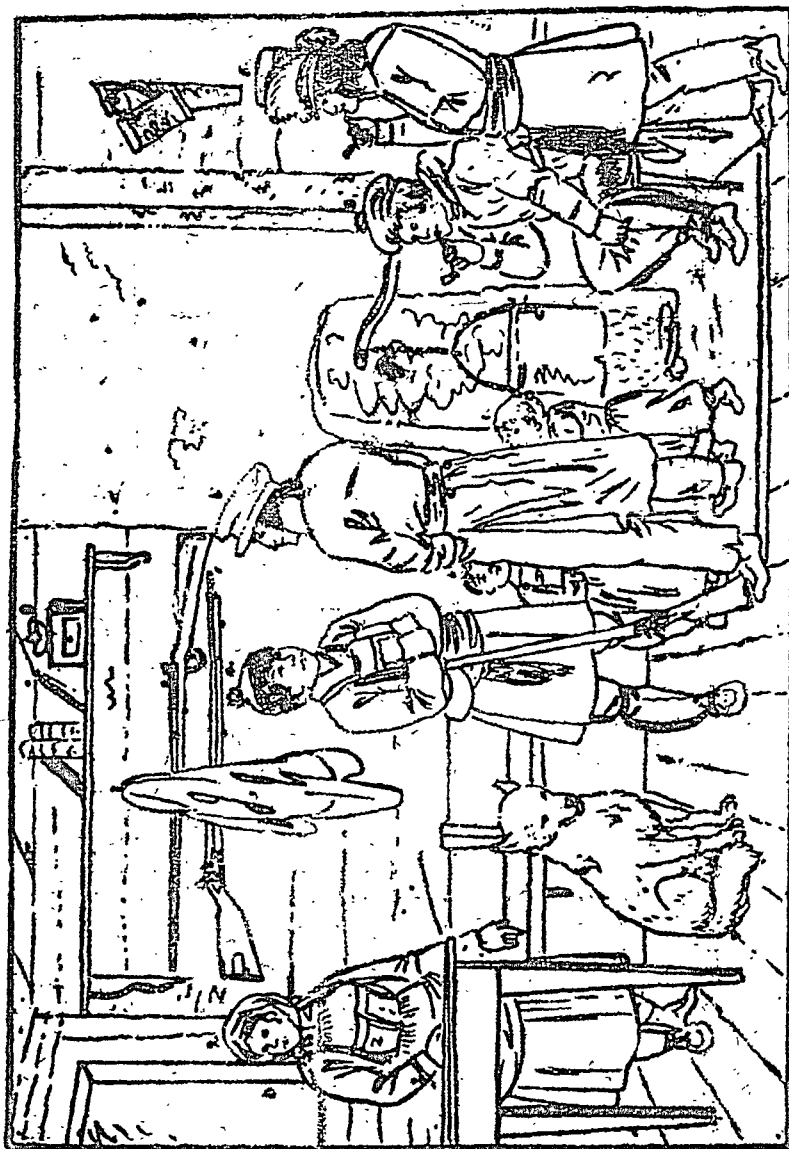
## FIDLER'S FORT

In the year 1887 I interviewed Donald Murray, George Bannerman, John Matheson, John Polson and Mrs. Kaufman, all survivors of the original Selkirk Colony, who were old enough at the time of their arrival in 1812-15 to remember the events that transpired in connection with the disputes and local occurrences resulting from the conflict between the rival interests of the Northwest Company, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Selkirk Colony Government. The evidence of these survivors, bearing on a number of matters not hitherto recorded, is contained in my work "The Selkirk Settlement and the Settlers," 1887. Evidence of the fort building activities of the two companies following the conflict of 1816 is very meagre, hence the great value of the statements obtained from persons who were residents of this locality during that period.

Mr. Donald Murray, long since deceased, was in that year a wonderfully clear minded and physically active old gentleman, and the information which he afforded me, endorsed by the other survivors, when checked where possible by the official documents of the period, agreed in almost every detail. Mr. Murray, who was born at Kildonan, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in or about the year 1801, came to the Red River in 1815 with Lord Selkirk's fourth party of colonists, and lived there until his death, consequently he was a participant in, or eye witness of, most of the events and exciting times of what are commonly termed "the Colony troubles."

In connection with the forts at the mouth of the Red River, Mr. Murray said, his words being taken down in writing at the time and read over to him at the close of the interview:

"The Northwest Company's fort was called "Gibraltar," and stood on the Assiniboine point, at the mouth of that river, but it has now gone into the river a good many years, I think. I do not know of any traces of any earlier fort known as Fort Rouge. The Hudson's Bay Company, however, had a fort which stood close to where Notre Dame Street, East, is now. This was the fort which Dr. Bryce was unable to locate when he wrote his book about the old forts. This fort was built by Peter Fidler about 1817-18, but he went to Brandon House in the latter year, and it was first occupied by one James Sutherland, who finished it in 1819. As nearly as I can now locate its position, it was situated between what is at present McDermot Ave. and Notre Dame St. East, but perhaps nearer Notre Dame than the other. It was near the rise in the ground, and a few hundred yards from the Red River. It was about square, the principal entrance facing exactly to the point between the two rivers. At the farther end, opposite to this gate, stood the master's house, which was larger than the others, which ranged down each side of the palisaded enclosure, about four on each side, but I do not remember exactly how many there were. There was a walk between them and the palisades, and an



open courtyard in the centre. (I still have the plan Mr. Murray drew for me of the fort. (C.N.B.) I often slept in this fort, and in 1818, when I went to Brandon House, I started from it. I do not recall that it had any particular name other than "the Company's Fort." It was quite distinct from the later Fort Garry, and stood at the same time as Forts Douglas and Gibraltar. I forget just when it disappeared, but it probably stood until the flood of 1826, and was then swept away, like the remains of Fort Douglas, then owned by Mr. Logan. If you doubt that this fort was there, just find out about a marriage ceremony I was at in it. I was the only guest from the colony invited, when the following persons were married by the Rev. John West: James Bird, the chief factor, to a daughter of Thomas Thomas; Thos. Thomas, a retired chief factor, to Miss Monture; and Jos. Bird, a son of James, to a Swamp Cree woman."

(Note: I personally examined the marriage register kept by the Rev. John West, still preserved in St. John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, and the above three entries show on the record, and are dated as at Red River Colony, C.N.B.)

It is, I think, certain that Mr. Murray's statement is in strict accord with the fact, and that there was a fort, the existence of which has been lost sight of, built by the Hudson's Bay Company as apart from their then dilapidated Fort Douglas.

Mr. Murray also made the following statement:

"Fort Garry (the First) for years was only called "the Company's Fort" by the settlers, and it was not until the last fort was erected that it was regularly called Fort Garry, though, of course, that was its proper name for years before."

"The Hudson's Bay Company used an old building that stood about two or three hundred yards north of Fort Gibraltar as a stable. That was after the companies joined. I do not know if they ever had a fort there before, but they used that old building as a stable when they moved out, and occupied the Northwest Company's fort about 1821. Before we came to the country, the Hudson's Bay Company had a store on the east bank of the Red River, opposite to the mouth of the Assiniboine, I think on the property where Mr. Norman Kittson (a man afterwards most prominent in the affairs of Minnesota, especially of St. Paul), later had his trading store. The company may have had a fort there, but I only know for a fact that they had some kind of a store."

### **THE FIRST FORT GARRY**

The Hudson's Bay post, named Fort Garry, after the amalgamation, certainly was the rebuilt old Fort Gibraltar of the Northwest Company, and though, after its first occupation, it was simply known as the Company's Fort, or the Forks, it was finally designated as Fort Garry, and in this connection it is interesting to note that on an occasion in the year 1887, when consulting the old



register of births, marriages and deaths of St. John's Church, Winnipeg, I came across an entry under date of April 18th, 1822, of the solemnization of a marriage, with George Simpson (afterwards Sir George) attesting as witness, at "Fort Gibraltar," the next following six entries being of marriages at "Fort Garry," one of which was also witnessed by Simpson, while a star was placed opposite the first above mentioned entry, drawing attention to a footnote, which reads "Fort Gibraltar is now named Fort Garry." Without doubt on that date Simpson changed the name to remove all feeling of resentment still existing amongst the Northwestern element with the occupation of the place by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Nicholas Garry, a member of the Hudson's Bay Company's Council, after whom the fort was named, visited the settlement about this date, his name afterwards appearing, with that of Simpson, as witness to a marriage at Norway House, Lake Winnipeg, on the 12th August, 1821.

That the First Fort Garry was a good deal of a ramshackle place is described by Alexander Ross in his "Fur Hunters of the Far West" (1855). Ross, on his arrival at the Red River from British Columbia via the fur traders' overland route, in 1825, rode up on horseback from below the present Selkirk to Fort Garry, reaching the fort on the evening of the 2nd July, and described it in the following words: "I was anxious to see the place, I had heard so much about it, but I must confess I felt disappointed. Instead of a place walled and fortified, as I had expected, I saw nothing but a few wooden houses huddled together, without palisades, or any regard to taste or even comfort. To this cluster of huts were, however, appended two long bastions in the same style as the other buildings.

These buildings, according to the custom of the country, were used as dwellings and warehouses for the carrying on of the trade of the place. Nor was the Governor's residence anything more in its outward appearance than the cottage of a humble farmer, who might be able to spend fifty pounds a year. These, however, were evidences of the settled and tranquil state of the country."

This fort was occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company as their headquarters, apart from the business of the Selkirk Colony as such, and with successive Governors until the appointment of Alexander Christie in 1835, who, in that year, began the erection of the Second Fort Garry, known to the present generation, of which the rear gateway now stands in the small Fort Garry Park which extends through from Main Street to Fort Street, immediately south of Broadway, and in the rear of the Manitoba Club. The buildings of the old evacuated fort, however they were utilized, remained until 1852, when as they were in part falling into the Assiniboine, they were demolished.

## THE SECOND FORT GARRY

Realizing the necessity for better and greater accommodation for the conduct of their business, which, since the coalition of the two companies, had greatly improved, in 1831 the Hudson's Bay Company built at the then head of deep water navigation, just below St. Andrew's Rapids, the large and costly establishment which became known as the Stone Fort, or lower Fort Garry. The general tradition amongst the English population was that Sir George Simpson, viewing with some alarm the increasing turbulence of a part of the metis of French extraction, deemed it advisable in case of a clash between the Company and that section of the Red River population, to have a stronghold nearer the centre of the English-speaking white and half-breed inhabitants. Indeed, it was then generally understood in the Settlement that Government of the Company would be removed to the Lower Fort.

Whatever the policy may have been in 1831, it was changed, and Governor Alexander Christie, who had been a councillor of the governors of the Company's territories, and later Governor of Assiniboia in 1833 (an office he held for two terms, 1833-39 and 1844-48), began the erection in 1835 of the large and quite imposing Fort Garry which, until 1882, was the centre of the Company's business affairs in what is now Manitoba, and as well the centre of the social life of the Red River Settlement.

The Court House and jail was originally within the fort, but a minute of a meeting of the Council of Assiniboia held 3rd July, 1843, explains that "It being found exceedingly dangerous and inconvenient to have the public jail within the walls of Fort Garry, it was resolved: That the present jail be abandoned and that a new building be erected on some suitable spot by the Hudson's Bay Company, to be in future used for that purpose." The new Court House and Jail was built immediately adjoining the fort on the northwest side, and here several important cases were tried, particularly those connected with the claim of many of the inhabitants of the Settlement, both French and English, of their right to trade in furs, and which the Company, acting under the powers of its charter, granted in 1670, resolved not to concede. This claim of the people lay at the very root of the dissatisfaction which prevailed, causing serious outbreaks, and the presentation of their claims, by some of the people, to both the heads of the Hudson's Bay Company in London and the Canadian and British Governments. I happen to have the original letter book of Fort Garry, containing much of the correspondence that took place

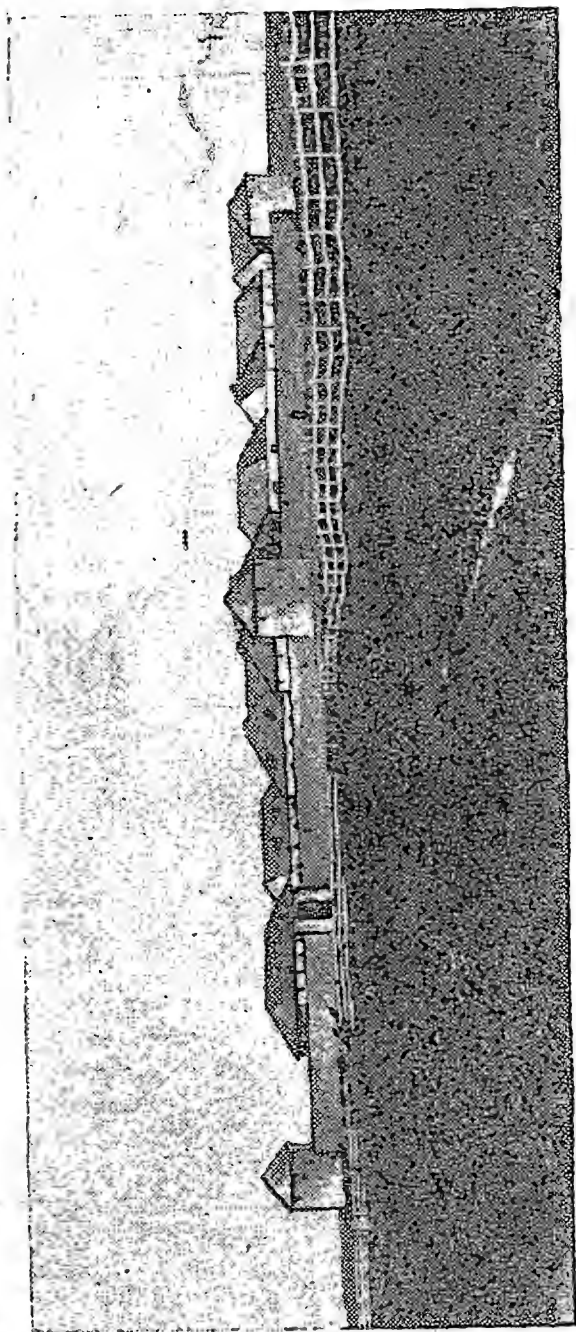
between the Company and the leaders of the Red River people on this subject, and it affords very entertaining and instructive reading.

On several occasions detachments of Imperial troops were sent to the Red River Settlement by the British Government in response to urgent requests of the Hudson's Bay Company, and these were all in turn, during their stay, quartered within the stone walls of Fort Garry. In 1846, eighteen officers and three hundred and twenty-nine men, being a wing of the 6th Royal Regiment of Foot, with artillery and engineers, under the command of Colonel John F. Crofton, arrived, having made the long journey from England via Hudson Bay, Lake Winnipeg and the Red River. They remained quartered in the fort for two years, and then returned to Great Britain by the same route.

In the autumn of 1848, seventy pensioners arrived under command of Major Caldwell, the object of this corps being that they should form the nucleus of a local force to be recruited in the Red River Settlement, to support the enforcement of the laws of the Hudson's Bay Company. Major Caldwell remained in the Settlement until 1855, but most of the men settled down in the country.

In 1856, the Company evidently brought strong pressure to bear on the Imperial Government to send another military force to Fort Garry. In this year also, two hundred United States troops arrived at Pembina, and the first act of this body was to issue a proclamation, notifying British subjects that they must not cross the International Boundary line to hunt or trade in furs. As a result of the situation, the Imperial Government in 1857 sent a company of the Royal Canadian Rifles via the Hudson's Bay route, and these remained until 1861, when they returned to England.

It was not until 1870 that the next troops appeared at Fort Garry, on the occasion of the first Riel Rebellion, at the time when Canada by mutual arrangement with the Imperial Government and the Hudson's Bay Company, was taking over and incorporating into the Dominion of Canada the whole territory of Ruperts Land, over which exclusive fur trading privileges had been given to the Company under their charter granted by King Charles in 1670. On this occasion, Colonel (afterwards His Lordship, Field Marshall) Wolseley conducted an expedition from Eastern Canada to Fort Garry, the force consisting of three hundred and fifty men of the Sixtieth Royal Rifles, with a small number of artillery and engineers, in addition to six hundred volunteers recruited in



Fort Garry in 1868. One of first photographs taken in Red River. View from bank of Assiniboine east of present Main Street.

Ontario and Quebec, but principally in Ontario. This force was conveyed in two hundred boats by the old fur traders' route from Fort William to Winnipeg, across some forty-seven portages, and that without the death of a single man, and with very little sickness. Colonel Wolseley laid strong emphasis on the fact that this was one of the few British military expeditions in history in which no liquor was served to the men. The regular troops, after a few days' stay, returned by the same route to Eastern Canada, while the six hundred volunteers remained quartered during the winter of 1870-71 in Fort Garry and Lower Fort Garry, with one company at the Hudson's Bay Company's post on the International line. In the spring of 1871, a great many of the officers and men took their discharges and remained in the country, the balance returning to their homes in Eastern Canada early in the summer. It may be of local interest to learn that but six of this force reside in Winnipeg today, viz.: Sir D. H. McMillan, Sir Hugh John Macdonald, W. F. Alloway, W. S. Volume, R. I. Jones and C. N. Bell.

On the departure of the general volunteer force, a "Service Company," recruited from officers and men from the Ontario and Quebec Battalions was organized as a permanent force to form a garrison in Fort Garry.

The next and last occasion on which a military force, sent from outside the province, arrived at Fort Garry, was when a body of Fenians traversed the State of Minnesota from St. Paul to Pembina, with the intention of taking possession of the Red River Settlement, and, if possible, making of it an Irish Republic. General O'Neil, in command, vociferously announced that he was to be joined by a large number of the French half-breeds resident in Manitoba. The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba issued a call, and within 24 hours nine hundred citizens responded, were hastily armed, and, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine, marched on a desperately cold day in October, 1871, in a storm of snow and sleet, across the Assiniboine (by scow ferry) and towards the International Boundary to meet the valorous general and his band of ruffians. The troops next day had reached where the town of Morris now stands, when they were met by information that Colonel Wheaton, commanding the United States troops at Pembina, ignoring the supposed International Line (which had not then been definitely located), had crossed and captured the general and his small band of tatter-demalions (who had not been joined by a single French half-breed). Order was immediately restored in the province, but on the news of the Fenian raid

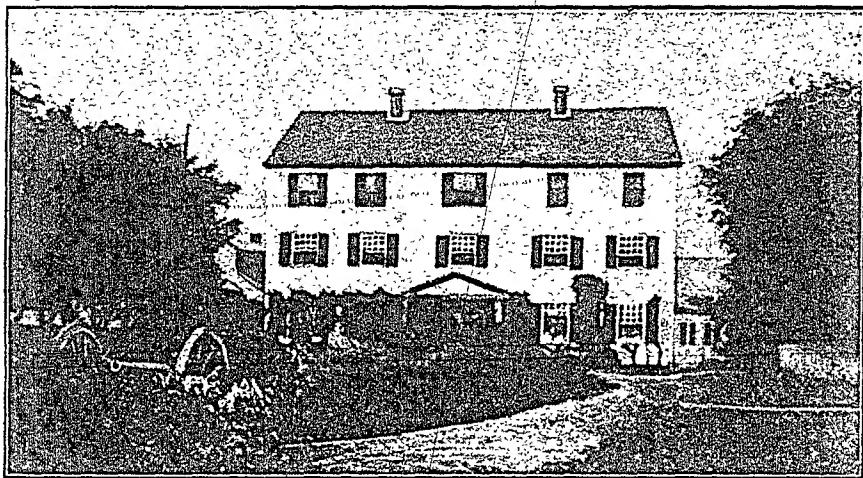
reaching the Canadian Government at Ottawa, a force was hastily organized and despatched to Fort Garry, two hundred men under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Scott, an old Eastern veteran of previous Fenian raids and Red River expedition experience, and this force reached Fort Garry on the 18th November, after going through great hardships, their boats being finally frozen in on the Lake of the Woods, after which the men marched from the North West Angle direct to Winnipeg, making 110 miles in four and a half days. This was one of the greatest feats, conducted under such circumstances, that Canadian troops have ever performed.

From 1871 a small permanent force of troops were quartered in the fort until the erection of barracks and other necessary military buildings in an enclosed space, which received the name of Fort Osborne.

The Lieutenant-Governors of Manitoba resided within the northern enclosure of Fort Garry, to which the gateway yet remaining was the entrance, until the building known as "Government House" was erected, and which is still the official residence of that official.

Fort Garry, as built in 1835, enclosed a space of 240 feet from north to south, and 280 feet from east to west, the heavy walls being constructed of stone, with four large round bastions at the corners. The buildings, including the officers' and employees' residential quarters, warehouses and retail store were distributed within the enclosing walls. The large main gate faced the Assiniboine River, and was not far back from the bank of that stream. There were two small postern gates, one of which was in the east wall beside the retail store, and it was through this gate that Thomas Scott was taken for his execution by order of Riel and his Provisional Government in 1870. The other postern gave access, through the main wall at the northeast corner of the fort, to what was called the fur warehouse. It may be here pointed out that several years after the original fort was built an addition was made at the north end to provide quarters for the resident governor of the Company. The high walls of this added enclosure were constructed of large solid square oak logs, laid horizontally in the form of crib work, the space between the outer and inner oak walls being filled with earth, and it was at this time that the gateway still remaining in the small Fort Garry Park was erected.

In 1882, during the Winnipeg real estate boom, the Company sold the fort and the ground upon which it stood, this area having been surveyed into city lots, and the purchasers demolished the fort, except the small northern gateway, which still remains; and so passed Fort Garry, the Second, within whose walls many scenes of excitement, hospitality and commerce took place during its existence from 1835-1882. The Governor's residence was the centre of many a jollification, on the occasions when he invited visiting and resident officers and other guests to grand spreads, the table being well supplied with choice tid-bits in the form of game obtained from all parts of the Company's territory. Reindeer tongues and ptarmigan from the far north, buffalo tongues and joints from the plains, smoked bear hams, carefully prepared pemmican of deer and buffalo meat made with marrow, moose nose, beaver tail, sturgeon and whitefish, and other delicacies were provided for the guests, to be washed down by the best of teas, and generally drowned with the choicest of old liquors and wines taken from the well stocked cellars of the fort. To be invited to dine at the Governor's table was an event to be looked forward to. The newly articulated clerk on his first arrival was initiated into the mysteries of the fur trade by listening to the tremendous yarns of the officials from the interior districts, and those of us who, at a later date, had the privilege of listening to these weathern-worn men know what wonderful experiences they could relate. Now and then in the old days, some traveller on his



The Governor's house inside of Fort Garry, in immediate rear of gateway still standing.  
Courtesy Mr. H. S. Seaman.





way to the far west or north, in pursuit of exploration, scientific observations or hunting, passed through the Settlement, and always received a hearty welcome at the Fort; indeed the travellers who have given us books on their work and adventures in the then vast uncharted areas of the country, invariably dwell on the hospitality extended to them at Fort Garry.

This Society was largely instrumental in securing the old gateway and park for the City of Winnipeg. Representatives of the Society taking the opportunity of Lord Strathcona visiting the City, waited on him and urgently pleaded that the site be donated to Winnipeg to be used for all time as a public park. His Lordship was most sympathetic and shortly afterwards the Hudson's Bay Company made conveyance of the property to the City.

—CHARLES NAPIER BELL.

